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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMCONSUL MEDAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 747
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0371

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EGEN, SOCI, ID
SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN IN NORTH SUMATRA

REF: SURABAYA 457; JAKARTA 12452; JAKARTA 12591

1. IN NORTH SUMATRA, OPSTIB (OPERATION ORDER) HAS TO DATE NOT PRODUCED THE SELF-GENERATING MOMENTUM AND THE DEEPER-THAN-EXPECTED IMPACT THAT HAS OCCURRED IN JAVA. THE THOUSAND MILE DISTANCE FROM THE CAPITAL, WHICH IS IN LOCAL ATTITUDES MORE THAN JUST GEOGRAPHIC, MAY BE PRODUCING AN AUTOMATIC LAG TIME IN REACTION; ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DISTANCE IS PROBABLY SEEN, TOO, AS A CONVENIENT BUFFER BY LOCAL OFFICIALS FOR TAKING MODERATE ACTION UNTIL SHOWN OTHERWISE. CERTAINLY THE RESPONSE OF LOCAL OFFICIALS IN CUSTOMS AND POLICE WORK IS GENERALLY TO STOP DOING THEIR DUTIES OR TO WORK VERY SLOWLY TO RULE. THIS SORT OF RESPONSE HAS ONLY GENERATED CONFLICTING ATTITUDES AMONG THE LOCAL CITIZENRY, ONE THAT WELCOMES AN EFFORT TO DO AWAY WITH A DEEPLY ENTRENCHED BRIBERY SYSTEM THAT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED TO HAVE GONE TOO FAR AND THE OTHER THAT BEMOANS THE LOSS OF "PUNGLI" OR BRIBES, WHICH WERE AN EXPENSIVE BUT AT LEAST EFFECTIVE WAY OF GETTING THINGS DONE. ALSO COUPLED WITH A GENUINE PUBLIC HOPE THAT OPSTIB WILL MAKE SOME IMPROVEMENT IS THE CAVEAT THAT IT IS NEITHER FAIR, NOR CONDUCIVE TO THE LONG RUN SUCCESS OF
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THE OPERATION, IF ONLY THE LOW LEVEL CORRUPTERS ARE HIT.

2. TWO NORTH SUMATRA OPSTIB TEAMS HAVE BEEN CREATED WHICH HAS PROMPTED A GOOD DEAL OF PRESS EFFORT TO EXTRACT FROM LOCAL LEADERS THE PURPOSE OF TWO BODIES AND TO LOOK NATURALLY FOR CONFLICTS. KODAM II COMMANDER ISMAIL, WITH THE POLICE CHIEF AS HIS OPSTIB DEPUTY, DEFINES HIS TEAM'S TASK AS OVERALL COORDINATION OF THE PROGRAM IN NORTH SUMAT

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RA.
TO DATE THE MILITARY'S PUBLIC EFFORT HAS BEEN LIMITED TO SPEECHES
TO THE TROOPS EXHORTING DISCIPLINE AND THE END OF "PUNGLI". A
TEAM UNDER THE GOVERNOR'S DEPUTY, BARDANSJAH, ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL
CLEAN HOUSE WITHIN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT.
SEPTEMBER 21 IT ANNOUNCED ITS FIRST ACTION, THE FIRPMG OF SIXTEEN
PEOPLE IN THE PERSONNEL SECTION OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR
COLLECTING BRIBES IN JOB PLACEMENT. OTHERWISE, IT HAS BEEN STUDYING
WHAT TO DO ABOUT ALL THE ILLEGAL OR EXTRA-LEGAL LEVIES USED IN THE
PROVINCE. PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES ARE REPORTED TO BE RELUCTANT TO
ABANDON EXTRA-LEGAL LEVIES ON SUCH THINGS AS NIGHT CLUB OPERATIONS,
BINGO GAMES, TV SET PURCHASES, MOVIE TICKETS, AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
RESISTRATION BECAUSE IT WOULD REDUCE THE PROVINCE'S INCOME TOO MUCH.
THE ONLY LEVY KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED SO FAR, SINCE
PROCEEDS CLEARLY WENT INTO PRIVATE POCKETS, WAS THE PARKING FEE
AT THE MEDAN AIRPORT.

3. IN THE GENERAL WAIT-AND-SEE ATMOSPHERE STILL PREVAILING HERE,
THERE HAS BEEN AT LEAST A SHIFT AWAY FROM SOME OLD ESTABLISHED
PUNGLI METHODS. FOR INSTANCE, PETTY HARRASSMENT OF THE CHINESE
COMMUNITY BY POLICE AND HANSIP (CIVIL RESERVES WHO PATROL THE
NEIGHBORHOODS AT NIGHT) HAS SLACKENED; EXIT PERMIT PRICES HAVE
DROPPED; AND CUSTOMS OFFICERS AT THE PORT OF BELAWAN HAVE BEEN PUT
OUT OF BOUNDS IN THEIR OFFICES FROM VISITS BY IMPORTERS. THERE IS AS
YET, HOWEVER, NO LOUD APPLAUSE. POLICEMENT, WHO USED BLATANTLY TO
COLLECT MONEY FROM SUPPOSED TRAFFIC OFFENDERS,
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SIMPLY STAND AROUND AT THEIR CORNER STATIONS DOING ABSOLUTELY
NOTHING; ONE POLICEMAN SEEN GOING OVER TO AN AUTO ACCIDENT TURNED
AROUND AND RAN AWAY WHEN SOMEONE IN THE CROWD YELL AT HIM "PUNGLI,
PUNGLI." NOW, THEREFORE, COMPLAINTS ARE HEARD WHAT MEDAN'S UN-
DISCIPLINED TRAFFIC IS JUST MORE CHAOTIC THAN EVER. WITH REGARD TO
EXIT PERMITS, THE CUTTING OUT OF THE TRAVEL AGENCY MIDDLE MAN HAS
MEANT THAT PERSONS WANTING THE PERMITS MUST STAND IN LINE FOR HOURS
GOING THROUGH THE ROUTINE ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES SOMETIMES FACED
WITH A NEW FORM OF "PUNGLI" WHEN A THOUSAND RUPIAH PAYMENT IS DEMANDED

BY THE CLERKS TO REPLACE THEIR "LOST" FORMS. FINALLY, AT THE PORT OF
BELAWAN STORIES ABOUND THAT THE WAREHOUSES ARE CLOGGED UP WITH
GOODS BECAUSE OF THE DELIBERATE SLOWNESS OF CUSTOMS OFFICERS IN
CLEARING THEM. THERE IS EVERY INDICATION, NONETHELESS, THAT THE
IMPORTERS ARE RAPIDLY COMING UP WITH A NEW SCHEME FOR GREASING THE
WHEELS FINANCIALLY SO THAT THEIR GOODS WILL MOVE. THE NEW SCHEME
IS TERMED IN THE PRESS WITH THE INITIALS, SSS, STANDING IN INDO-
NESIAN FOR SENANG SAMA SENANG OR SATISFACTION FOR BOTH. OPSTIB IN
NORTH SUMATRA HAS THUS MADE LITTLE HEADWAY AT THIS STAGE IN PRODUCING
THE KIND OF SPIRIT, FORCED OR VOLUNTEERED, WHEREBY SATISFACTION
IS SIMPLY DOING A JOB EFFICIENTLY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY.
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